

## Saving the Savings for Highway 12 Projects

Construction will begin this summer on a **new intersection joining U.S. Highway 12 and State Route 124**. The Legislature allocated \$29.5 million and the bids for the project came in about \$5 million less than anticipated.

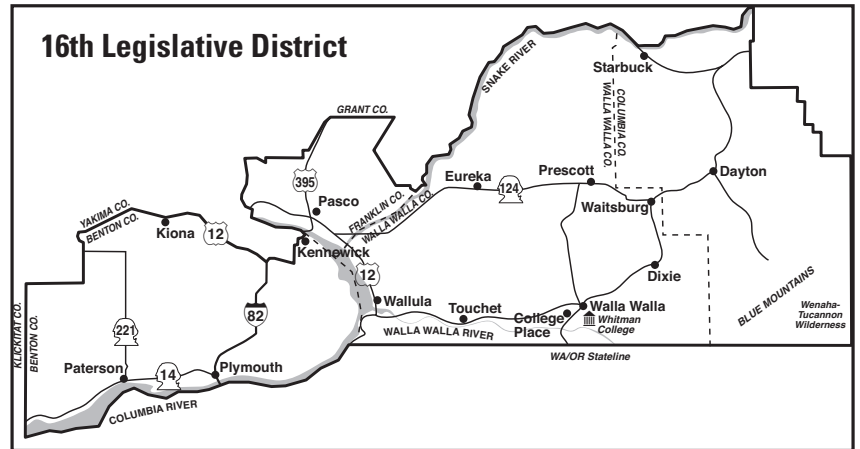
We thought this savings could be applied to pay for land for the remaining two expansion phases of Highway 12. Unfortunately, in the preliminary transportation budget, that money was absorbed for other projects across the state. When we saw that savings had been removed from the 16th District, we worked to get it back. **Fortunately, we were able to secure \$2 million of that savings in the final transportation spending plan for Highway 12.**

Highway 12 is heavy with truck traffic and has experienced many terrible accidents. We have made progress with expansion of the highway. We will continue working to ensure that momentum continues.

## We are here to serve you. . .

State government can seem distant and confusing. If you have a problem and don't know where to turn, perhaps we could help. Write, call or visit our offices and we'll do our best to assist you. If you feel new legislation is needed or adjustments should be made to existing legislation, we also want to hear from you. Please contact our district offices nearest you.

**Pasco: (509) 543-3325 • Walla Walla (509) 526-6284**



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Rep. Maureen Walsh:  
[www.housepublicans.wa.gov/Walsh](http://www.housepublicans.wa.gov/Walsh)  
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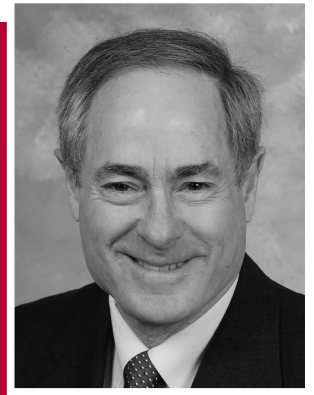
**REP. MAUREEN WALSH**  
**REP. TERRY NEALEY**

**16th District • 2010 Session Report**

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# 2010 Session Report From Representatives



## Maureen Walsh and Terry Nealey

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Dear friends,

After completing a 60-day regular session on March 11, the majority party still was unable to reach an agreement over how to close a \$2.8 billion supplemental budget gap. This pushed the Legislature into an extended special session while House and Senate majority Democrats continued to disagree among themselves over which taxes to increase.

Although balancing the budget requires difficult choices, we believe tax increases could hurt families and prolong the economic recession. Instead of tax hikes, we asserted that the long-term solution to our budget problems is to provide reforms that protect and grow private-sector jobs. We also felt the budget should be prioritized to focus on education, public safety, and protection of the most vulnerable. We are disappointed that these views were disregarded in favor of tax increases. Still, we won several important issues for the 16th District, which are highlighted in this newsletter.

It is an honor to serve you. Please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Rep. Maureen Walsh

Rep. Terry Nealey

### Budget and Taxes

#### Raising taxes in this recession is a bad idea

when families are struggling to pay their bills and employers have cut back workers and hours just to stay afloat. More than 4,500 people in the 16th District are out of work. We don't think it is fair to ask them and others who are barely getting by to pay more because of the Legislature's overspending habits. That's why **we fought for 10 hours on the House floor against the suspension of Initiative 960**, because it protected taxpayers from the Legislature's old tax-and-spend habits. It was the will of the people to hold the Legislature accountable in its budgeting and spending practices. Unfortunately, the majority voted to sweep the initiative out of its way so that taxes could be raised more easily.

The major reason for the \$2.8 billion shortfall is that for the past four years **state government has spent more money than it brought in**. While incoming revenues were increasing by 6 percent, the Legislature was spending 14.7 percent, more than double the intake. That's largely what got the state into

this budget mess.

The final supplemental budget closes the shortfall using a combination of reductions, one-time federal money (yet to be approved by Congress), and nearly \$800 million in tax increases. Taxes are increased on the following professionals: real estate agents, veterinarians, optometrists, dentists, graphic artists, attorneys, accountants, property management, direct sellers, hairstylists, architects and more. **Products that will cost more** because of tax increases include: candy, bottled water, soda, beer, cigarettes and cigars. **We voted 'no' on these tax increases.**

We're also concerned that little was done to reform state spending. In fact, **the final budget is only a 4.7 percent reduction** from the previous two-year budget and relies heavily on one-time money for ongoing programs. It also drains the rainy-day fund. That means next year, we may see a multi-billion deficit without federal money or a savings safety net to cover it.

# REP. MAUREEN WALSH • 2010 REPORT

Committees: Early Learning and Children's Services • Health and Human Services Appropriations • Human Services

## Government Reform

This year the Legislature had a **great opportunity to truly restructure government**. With the economy flattening out, we needed to take steps to bring government spending in line with the revenues we are taking in. I am a huge proponent of taking a look at state programs and finding better ways to provide the same services more efficiently.

One proposal was to **break up the Department of Social and Health Services**. This 19,000-person agency has become so large its purpose and goals are getting lost. Dozens of children have lost their lives while under the agency's supervision despite reports that these children's lives could be at risk. We must do more to protect the children under the state's care and provide services for the truly needy in our state. Streamlining the agency's core functions would allow the state to respond to the needs of citizens and remain responsible to the taxpayers.

## Made in Washington Plan

We should be exhausting all resources and making every effort to attract jobs to our area and retain critical family-wage employment in the state. Before the Legislature convened in January, we supported a package of bills to revitalize our economy and spur job growth.

### The plan has four main goals:

- 1. Protect and create jobs by revitalizing Washington's economy and attracting new investment.**
  - Make common-sense updates to the current state-run workers' compensation system to cut costs while still offering the benefits injured workers expect – no public hearing.
  - Return people to work sooner by improving the efficiency of our workers' compensation system – no public hearing.
- 2. Provide regulatory relief by reforming government services to ease burdensome and costly regulations.**
  - Give employers two business days to correct mistakes before a state agency can issue a fine or penalty – signed into law.
  - Require new state agency rules be reviewed by the Legislature before being adopted – no public hearing.
- 3. Increase affordable, renewable energy supplies.**
  - Recognize hydropower as a renewable resource to keep electricity costs affordable – public hearing held, no action taken.
- 4. Protect workers' health care with reforms that reduce costs and enhance consumer choice.**
  - Allow consumers to choose health insurance plans across state lines – no public hearing.
  - Create an affordable core benefit plan for young adults ages 19 to 34, our largest group of uninsured Washingtonians – no public hearing.

These are just a few of the ideas we had to create job opportunities in our state. You **can read more about the plan** to make "made in Washington" mean something again here: [www.housepublicans.wa.gov/our-solutions/made-in-washington](http://www.housepublicans.wa.gov/our-solutions/made-in-washington). We will continue to advocate for this plan to restore our economy.



Rep. Maureen Walsh and Robert and Linnea Keatts (left) with Walla Walla High School exchange students.





# REP. TERRY NEALEY • 2010 REPORT

Committees: Education Appropriations • Technology, Energy and Communications • Transportation

## Public Facilities District Bill Could Help Local Economy

The Legislature approved and the governor signed a bill that clears the way for the Tri-Cities to create a regional public facilities district (PFD). Formation of that district could lead to future construction of a regional aquatic center, a performing arts center, and other special events centers.

I introduced House Bill 2525 to fix a technical problem in a law that passed last year which was intended to allow the creation of regional PFDs. The measure gives Richland, Pasco and Kennewick the flexibility to pool their resources to build regional public event facilities. **Approved projects will create new jobs and provide additional recreational opportunities that could attract people from throughout the region.**



Gov. Chris Gregoire signs Rep. Terry Nealey's legislation that will allow for the creation of a regional public facilities district in the Tri-Cities.

## Keeping a Promise Made To Farmers

In 2006, the Legislature established minimum biodiesel fuel content requirements with the goal of using Washington-grown crops for biofuels. Eastern Washington **farmers were promised a market for their biofuel crops**. To ensure that market would remain strong, state ferries were added as the largest biodiesel user.

Farmers invested, planted and harvested these crops, but it wasn't long before the state mandates were relaxed because of market prices. Not long afterward, ferries were exempted. That left farmers without the incentive to raise biodiesel-supporting crops.

This year, a measure was introduced to update the renewable fuel standards. On behalf of our local farmers, **I added an amendment to restore the ferries' biodiesel requirements**. The measure passed the House, but failed to make it out of the Senate Transportation Committee. We need to keep this promise. **I will continue fighting for our farmers to create a sustainable biofuels market for their crops.**

## Agriculture Tax Bullet Dodged

As bad as the \$800 million in new taxes are, it could have been worse. Advocates for Puget Sound cleanup had proposed substantial increases in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) tax. The 0.7 percent tax on hazardous substances and petroleum products was originally approved by voters through an initiative in 1988 as a means to clean up waterways across the state. But last year, the entire amount of the MTCA account (\$180 million) was swept into the state's general fund as the Legislature tried to close a budget deficit.

This year, **a proposal came before the Legislature to nearly TRIPLE the MTCA tax**, which could have been devastating to farmers, since the tax is also applied to fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and chemical sprays. Although it was being sold as a tax to improve water quality, **there was nothing in the legislation to prevent the money from being raided again for other programs.**

To protect farmers, I prepared an amendment to exempt fertilizers, pesticides and chemical sprays from the tax increase. **Fortunately, the MTCA tax increase died** in the final budget negotiations. If it comes up again next year, I will be prepared to fight it.

## Protecting Our Protection Officers

Washington State Penitentiary corrections officers in Walla Walla have a dangerous job managing some of the state's most violent criminals. Prisoners face several consequences if they attempt to harm an officer. But issuing longer time to prisoners who have lengthy or life sentences is not effective.

I introduced House Bill 3008 to create a **monetary penalty against inmates who injure corrections officers**. The measure would have allowed up to 20 percent of an inmate's wages, gratuities or workers' compensation benefits to be deducted as a civil judgment award for the officer assaulted by the inmate.

Inmates are compensated for working inside the prison, but don't make very much money. The Walla Walla officers have told me other states have found hitting prisoners in the pocketbook is a very effective deterrent against assaults.

Although this measure received a public hearing, it did not advance in the House. A similar bill in the Senate also died. Our corrections officers do an important job and that's why I will seek future passage of this legislation.

